

VERMONTERS: Let's Grow Hemp

The Times Argus
The Rutland Herald
Sunday April 22, 2012 (Earth Day)

We, the People of Vermont

hereby state our successful commitment to reintroduce Industrial Hemp agriculture.

Indeed, because of its value for textiles, the plant was first grown here by our early forefathers. They were literally mandated by George Washington to “*make the most of the Indian hemp weed.*” Then it was grown again during World War II with the government’s enthusiastic support: “Hemp for Victory”. Today, we want to grow it openly and peacefully once more, for commerce. The citizens of Vermont can no longer muster patience where immediate, strong action is called for. It is obvious that industrial hemp will be integral to our economic and environmental well-being and its production will be the cornerstone of our renewable resource actions.

Through our elected officials, we have complete, abundant and full legal support to reintroduce industrial hemp agriculture within our State of Vermont. It is amply clear to us all that federal politicians demonstrate a dangerous lack of motivation when it comes to the prevention of harmful pollution which now endangers life on Earth. Science begs Vermont to act and lead.

We categorically make clear that the agriculture of industrial hemp will in no manner either increase or hide cultivation of marijuana. Moreover, this type of cannabis has no capacity to create a “high” of any kind. Rather, it provides the raw

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material to manufacture environmentally beneficial products that outperform those we produce now by toxic petroleum and chemical means. We further clarify that the industrial hemp we are referring to has merely .05% - 1% of THC – an amount comparable to the amount of opiates in the poppy seeds that we eat, for example, in muffins or bagels. Vermont’s agriculture of industrial hemp will contribute greatly indeed to our critical global mandate to reduce deforestation. Hemp agriculture restores and rebuilds topsoil and therein carbon is

sequestered, without need of pesticide and very little fertilizers. During processing, it uses very little water.

Already, Europe

combines industrial hemp with lime to construct carbon-neutral, chemical-free, minimal energy-use homes and commercial buildings. Local industrial hemp gives us a protein and omega-rich food or biofuel source. Industrial hemp might provide the raw material for American bioplastics; American biofuel; American textiles; clothes; paper; and fiberboard. Our American automotive industry might combine electric vehicle technology with Henry Ford’s original idea to sheath cars, trains and planes with the extra-strong, yet lightweight fiber-composites made of industrial hemp.

In light of the impressive green economy that industrial hemp will create for Vermont, it would be truly negligent of us to continue to observe and enable this flawed federal classification of industrial hemp as a dangerous item, or a “controlled substance”. Thus, We the People of Vermont gracefully suggest that the Drug Enforcement Agency stand down from any intent to block our good work with criminal charges for what is clearly a non-criminal fiber crop. Further, we suggest that government lend its financial support to rebuild our manufacturing base with green products derived from industrial hemp. It is our earnest prayer that the entire country will benefit from improved industrial hemp policy.

Currently, the U.S. must import all of its industrial hemp. This places us at a disadvantage when compared to China, England, Canada, France and 27 other countries – who all have government-approved and flourishing industrial hemp industries. NAFTA's Article 713 provides for the use of relevant international standards, without reducing the level of protection of human, animal or plant life or health, as a basis for each NAFTA government's own S&P measures. Additionally, the 1979 FTA section 402(2) (19 U.S.C. 2532) already requires federal agencies, when developing standards, to take international standards into consideration and, if possible or appropriate, to use the international standards as a basis. The same section also prohibits federal agencies from engaging in standards-related activities that create unnecessary

obstacles to the foreign commerce of the United States. Insofar as Most Favored Nation Trade Status is afforded to Canada, it is obvious that such status must certainly be enjoyed by Vermont and all other states within our own country, as well. In other words, preventing Vermont – or any other state – from the competitive agriculture and production of industrial hemp is a violation of NAFTA.

Publication of this statement advises the DEA and other federal officials that Vermonters will begin the return of industrial hemp to our fields in the spring of 2012. Let it be known that our doing so is not intended to be disrespectful to the DEA or to federal policies but rather to be a crystal-clear indication that leadership in Vermont is now imperative. Vermont herein notifies the DEA/federal government that it must publish any objections or intentions to block or criminalize our efforts to restore industrial hemp productivity, and that it must do so within one month of the date of this publication, in this same publication in an equally open and visible manner. Failure to do so will result in the forfeiture of any right or responsibility by the DEA/FED to criminalize, limit, or restrict our green work of restoring industrial hemp cannabis to the fields, farms, and factories of Vermont. This strain of cannabis plant has qualities that cannot be matched by any other plant species. We act in allegiance to the well-being of our Earth, upon which everyone's life depends.

A copy of this notice has been sent certified mail to the DEA and the Federal Government